

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 IO-15 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 DRC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1133

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USMISSION GENEVA

USUN NEW YORK 1764

USLO PEKING

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, VT, CH, IN

SUBJECT: DALAI LAMA VISITS VATICAN

REF: ROME 9464

1. DALAI LAMA PAID LOW-KEY PRIVATE VISIT TO ROME, SEPT. 27 - OCTOBER 1, DURING WHICH TIME HE AND PARTY HOUSED AT MARIST CATHOLIC MONASTERY IN ROME SUBURBS. HIGHLIGHT OF VISIT WAS 30-MINUTE AUDIENCE WITH POPE PAUL SEPT. 30. IN HIS NON-COMMITTAL ADDRESS, WHICH CARRIED ON FIRST PAGE OF OCT. 2 VATICAN SEMI-OFFICIAL DAILY "OSSERVATORE ROMANO," POPE LIMITED HIMSELF TO WELCOMING LAMA ON HIS FIRST JOURNEY TO EUROPE, RECALLING JOY OF HIS OWN VISIT TO ASIA IN 1970 AND EXPRESSING HOPE THAT "ALL MEN MAY LIVE PEACEFULLY TOGETHER AND MAY EVER SEEK TRUE AND LIVING GOD." POPE THANKED LAMA FOR "COURTEOUS GESTURE" IN COMING TO SEE HIM AND NOTED THAT CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS DEEP INTEREST IN FOSTERING RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS.

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2. VATICAN SECRETARIAT FOR NON-CHRISTIANS, HEADED BY CARDINAL SERGIO PIGNEDOLI, MADE MOST OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR DALAI LAMA, WHICH INCLUDED LUNCHEON HOSTED BY PIGNEDOLI, SMALL RECEPTION IN LAMA'S HONOR AT PALAZZO PALAVICINI AND MEETINGS WITH CATHOLIC MONASTIC COMMUNITIES. INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO ITALY ALSO HOSTED SMALL DINNER IN DALAI LAMA'S HONOR.

3. RELIABLE VATICAN SOURCE ASSURED US THAT CONVERSATIONS WERE PURELY RELIGIOUS AND FRATERNAL IN NATURE WITH NO MENTION WHATSOEVER OF POLITICS. SOURCE OBSERVED THAT VATICAN HAD AVOIDED ANY PUBLIC OR PRIVATE MENTION OF DALAI LAMA'S ASSOCIATION WITH TIBET OR CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING HIS EXILE. VATICAN HAD NOT SOUGHT MEETING, BUT OF COURSE WAS HAPPY TO RESPOND TO DALAI LAMA'S REQUEST AS LONG AS IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT LAMA BEING RECEIVED EXCLUSIVELY AS PROMINENT RELIGIOUS FIGURE. SOURCE POINTED OUT THAT SINCE DALAI LAMA HAS NO INFLUENCE OVER RELATIONS BETWEEN CATHOLICS AND NON-CATHOLICS IN INDIA, HIS VISIT NOT NEARLY AS IMPORTANT AS RECENT VISIT BY LEADERS OF LAOTIAN AND THAI BUDDHIST COMMUNITIES. BEAUDRY

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